

Message Text

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ACTION AF-04

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 EUR-08 NEA-07 SP-02 L-01 EB-03

INR-05 PM-01 NSC-05 NSCE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 ACDA-05

SAJ-01 OMB-01 IGA-01 PRS-01 /060 W

----- 039455

R 011452Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5707

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 9285

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR SO ET US

SUBJECT: SOVIET PRESENCE IN SOMALIA

REF: JIDDA 5069

1. WE OFFER SOME COMMENTS ON SAUDI PROPOSAL FOR JOINT US-SAUDI EFFORTS TO REPLACE SOVIETS AS AID DONORS TO SOMALIA, TRYING TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN COMMENTS REFLECTING OUR PAROCHIAL ETHIOPIAN POINT OF VIEW AND BORDER QUESTIONS ON WHICH WE ARE NOT AS WELL EQUIPPED TO SPECULATE, BUT ON WHICH WE TRY ANYWAY.

2. PAROCHIAL.

(A) ANY SUBSTANTIAL US AID TO SOMALIA WILL TOUCH SENSITIVE NERVES IN EPMG AND WILL RESULT IN INCREASED SUSPICIONS OF US INTENTIONS - SUSPICIONS THAT ARE ALREADY VERY HIGH. SUCH PARANOID EPMG REACTIONS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED POSITIVELY NORMAL, AND IN MANY CASES THERE IS LITTLE OR NOTHING WE CAN DO ABOUT THEM. STILL, WE CANNOT BRUSH THEM ASIDE ENTIRELY BECAUSE IN CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES EPMG IS CAPABLE OF TAKING ACTIONS SERIOUSLY DETRIMENTAL BOTH TO EPMG INTERESTS AS WE SEE THEM, AND TO

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USG INTERESTS.

(B) IF USG UNDERTAKES SUBSTANTIAL ASSISTANCE EFFORT TO SOMALIA, WE SHOULD AT MINIMUM GIVE EPMG AS CANDID AN EXPLANATION OF OUR MOTIVATIONS AND OUR LONG-RANGE HOPES AS POSSIBLE. IMPORTANT ELEMENTS IN RULING DIRG WILL CERTAINLY SUSPECT GREAT-POWER COLLUSION-BETWEEN USG AND SOVIETS, OR BETWEEN USG AND ARABS- TO DETRIMENT OF ETHIOPIA. THEY WILL COMPARE ON A PER CAPITAL BASIS THE AMOUNTS OF AID TO SOMALIA AND ETHIOPIA. THEY WILL ALSO WORRY THAT IF PRES SIAD BECOMES LESS DEPENDENT ON SOVIETS, HE WILL BE LESS AFFECTED BY SOVIET RESTRAINTS. LIKEWISE AS SAUDIS TRY TO ACHIEVE GREATER INFLUENCE ON SOMALIA, ETHIOPIANS WILL WORRY THAT SAUDIS MAY BE DRIVEN BY SOMALIS TO GREATER PRO-MUSLIM INTERFERENCE IN THE HORN, VIZ: IN THE OGADEN, ERITREA AND IN DJIBOUTI TERRITORY.

2. BORDER VIEWS.

(A) WE WOULD SHARE TO SOME EXTENT EPMG'S PREDICTABLE CONCERNS THAT SOMALIA IN MULTI-DONOR SITUATION MIGHT FIND ITSELF FREER TO TAKE UNILATERAL ACTIONS (AGAINST ETHIOPIA OR DJIBOUTI) THAT IF IT IS RESPONSIBLE TO SINGLE DONOR (AND SOVIETS MUST TAKE SHARE OF BLAME FOR ANY SOMALI MISBEHAVIOR). CERTAINLY LAST COUPLE OF DECADES HAS SHOWN THAT MULTIPLE DONORD GIVE RECIPIENT ADDITIONAL FREEDOM OF ACTION. MOREOVER INJECTING SUDIS DIR- RECTLY INTO THE TANGLED PROBLEMS OF THE HORN WILL NOT BE AN UNMIXED BLESSING, TO ETHIOPIA, TO FRENCH DJIBOUTI, OR EVEN TO OUR INTERESTS. AT SAME TIME WE CAN SEE SOME ATTRACTIVE POSSIBILITIES TO US-SAUDI PARTNERSHIP IN BLOCKING SOVIET DESIGNS. FORM MIGHT WELL PROVE IMPORTANT-WHO WOULD BE OUT IN FRONT? WE WONDER, THOUGH, IF SUCH A PARTNERSHIP WOULD NOT EVENTUALLY HIGHLIGHT, PERHAPS ABRASIVELY, OUR DIVERGENT INTERESTS AND MOTIVATIONS. WE UNDERSTAND THAT IMMEDIATELY FORSEEABLE ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE RE- SOURCES COULD NOT BE PROVIDED BY USG UNTIL SOMALIS DO NECESSARY TO REMOVE EXISTING IMPEDIMENTS ON THEIR SIDE-WHICH THEY MAY BE UNABLE OR UNWILLING TO DO- AND WOULD NOT SUFFICE TO ALLOCATE NEW AID TO SOMALIA OF MAGNITUDE PROPOSED BY SAUDIS. IF SO, A SEPARATE SUPPLEMENTAL REQUEST MIGHT BE REQUIRED THAT WOULD TRIGGER THE KIND OF PRESS EXPOSURE (US-SOV RIVALRY, COLLUSION WITH SAUDIS) THAT USG WOULD PRESUMABLY WISH TO AVOID.

(B) WE DO NOT PRETEND TO BE ABLE TO JUDGE, FROM ADDIS,
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THE RELATIVE WEIGHTS OF SUCH CONSIDERATIONS. NOR DO WE HAVE ANY SUGGESTIONS ON HOW BEST TO RESPOND TO PRINCE SAUD'S RATHER AWKWARD QUESTION. WE WOULD WELCOME COMMENTS.
HUMMEL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, FOREIGN RELATIONS, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 01 AUG 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975ADDIS09285
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750266-0811
From: ADDIS ABABA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750888/aaaaczjy.tel
Line Count: 111
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: 75 JIDDA 5069
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 20 AUG 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <20 AUG 2003 by MartinML>; APPROVED <17 DEC 2003 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SOVIET PRESENCE IN SOMALIA
TAGS: PFOR, SO, ET, US, UR
To: STATE MOGADISCIO
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006